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PHILADELPHIA**



INDEPENDENCE SQUARE AND THE STATE HOUSE

Joseph Pennell

JOSEPH PENNELL'S PICTURES OF PHILADELPHIA

REPRODUCTIONS OF SIXTY-FOUR
LITHOGRAPHS MADE BY HIM
WITH
AN INTRODUCTION
BY
ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

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INTRODUCTION

PHILADELPHIA is no longer the Philadelphia that I knew, that Joseph Pennell knew, when we were young—no longer even OUR PHILADELPHIA of the book we came home once to make from a many years' exile in England.

William Penn might have recognized his peaceful green country town in the Philadelphia of our earlier years, though probably not without dismay at its already amazing growth. As I remember it then, its decent narrow streets had not been narrowed into alleys by skyscrapers out of all proportion, its green squares had not been deprived of their high iron railings, a heavy pile of masonry had not replaced the one large breathing space in the centre of the city. Trees shaded the immaculately clean brick pavements, flowers blossomed in spacious back yards, grapes hung over high verandas, the British sparrow was unknown. Philadelphia was big, rich, industrial, but it retained the old Quaker look and charm, a fitting background for the more important and beautiful Colonial buildings that remained its pride.

It is astonishing how unerringly Joseph Pennell turned to these old landmarks in his first search for beauty. As a child he knew they were beautiful; as a youth he began to draw them. I never would have known just how beautiful they were but for him. Our first work together—for "The Century Magazine"—had to do with the old Philadelphia that was so much older than ours. To go with him through the familiar streets was a voyage of discovery. Old St. Peter's was just around the corner from me, I passed the old State House almost daily and the old Hospital as often, lower Spruce and Pine Streets were lined with old Colonial houses undefiled by the invasion of the alien. But I took them all for granted, as indifferent to them as to the ugly library to which many of the daily walks led, or the unsightly warehouses across the street from our front windows. It was he who opened my eyes to the loveliness and dignity of the simple old architecture, who awoke my interest in its historic associations.

This was for me a season of adventure, discovery following discovery. For our work, we wandered further, to the Old Swedes' Christ Church, the Fourth and Arch Street Meeting House which was dearest

of all to him; for our work we went driving down queer old alley ways, —as marvellously picturesque as any in London or Edinburgh he used to say, though I doubt if William Penn would have approved of their picturesqueness; for our work we had long walks to Germantown to see its fine old houses, to the Wissahickon and its balconied inns, to the Park and its mansions, as far as to Bartram's and its garden, in those days an enchanting wilderness where there was scarcely ever another wanderer to share it with us. I was passing through my apprenticeship. He was already launched upon that career as illustrator for which he felt himself predestined, and many fine drawings tell the story of those first days of the many years of our work together.

When, after almost thirty years' absence, we returned in 1912 to visit our old Philadelphia, it had transformed itself into a new Philadelphia, changed beyond belief. It had the grace to show some respect for the past, not quite rivalling New York in trying to look as if it had never had a past. It had committed horrid acts of vandalism, was still to commit them—Joseph Pennell never did forgive, for one, the later destruction, for it is nothing else, of the old Fairmount Water Works in their perfect little park—"most beautiful architectural composition in America," is his description, "destroyed to build an Art Gallery." The old Philadelphia Library and other old buildings had vanished in 1912. But, on the whole, Philadelphia clung to the most notable landmarks that had made it famous as well as given it beauty. The old churches and meeting houses were still there, and the old Germantown houses and the Park mansions and Bartram's. But there was a difference. They had ceased to be in complete harmony with their background, they had little in common with the new edition of Penn's city, they mostly stood out from their brand-new surroundings, as unmistakably as if labelled "Historic Monuments."

However, that they were there was the great thing, and Joseph Pennell fell to drawing them all over again, though with a surer hand and the knowledge gained by long study of the architecture of Europe. He loved them no less, more if anything. He had often felt and said that the charm of many an old Eighteenth Century English town was in its looking so like his Philadelphia, and the buildings themselves, if now out of the picture, lost nothing by the comparison which the years

in England enabled him to make. But, because he loved the old, he did not disdain the new. He could never be accused of narrowness of vision—or of thought either, for that matter. He took his beauty where he found it, and he found beauty in the narrow streets deep down between the towering skyscrapers—"the canyons," as he had already called Broadway and other New York streets of skyscrapers. He found beauty in the very contrast between the new, so aggressive, so self-assertive, and the old, so ruthlessly overpowered—the little meeting house in Twelfth Street, for instance, he delighted to draw splendidly holding its own at the base of the incredibly tall and massive modern bulwarks. He found beauty in the very growth of industry and commerce instead of sharing Ruskin's scorn and hatred of it—in the new maze of rail tracks of the Pennsylvania and the Reading, in the new crowd of locomotives in their yard, in the smoke and bustle of the train shed, in the confusion of bridges and shipping and factories along the more-than-ever commercialized Schuylkill. At his every step the new Philadelphia provided him with subjects. The skyscrapers from a distance were as fine as when seen close-by, massed above the house tops. The elevated could arrange itself into bewildering designs. The WONDER OF WORK filled the huge manufacturing metropolis that had replaced the quiet Quaker town. That summer he made drawing after drawing, lithograph after lithograph, a record for all time.

To this record the last fourteen years have added a value that will increase as the years go on. The few Americans—the few Philadelphians—who care will already look in vain for some of the houses and places and points of view that were his inspiration when we came back in 1912 to re-discover Philadelphia. In the near future they may look no less in vain for the little that survives today. In America, it is beauty whose hand is ever at his lips bidding adieu. But, at least, the beauty that has been swept away, that will be swept away, lives in JOSEPH PENNELL'S PICTURES OF PHILADELPHIA that are a record of his great love for Philadelphia—Penn's Philadelphia—the Philadelphia of the Friends from whom he sprang.

ELIZABETH ROBINS PENNELL

BROOKLYN HEIGHTS, N. Y.
JUNE, 1926

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THE STATE HOUSE FROM INDEPENDENCE SQUARE



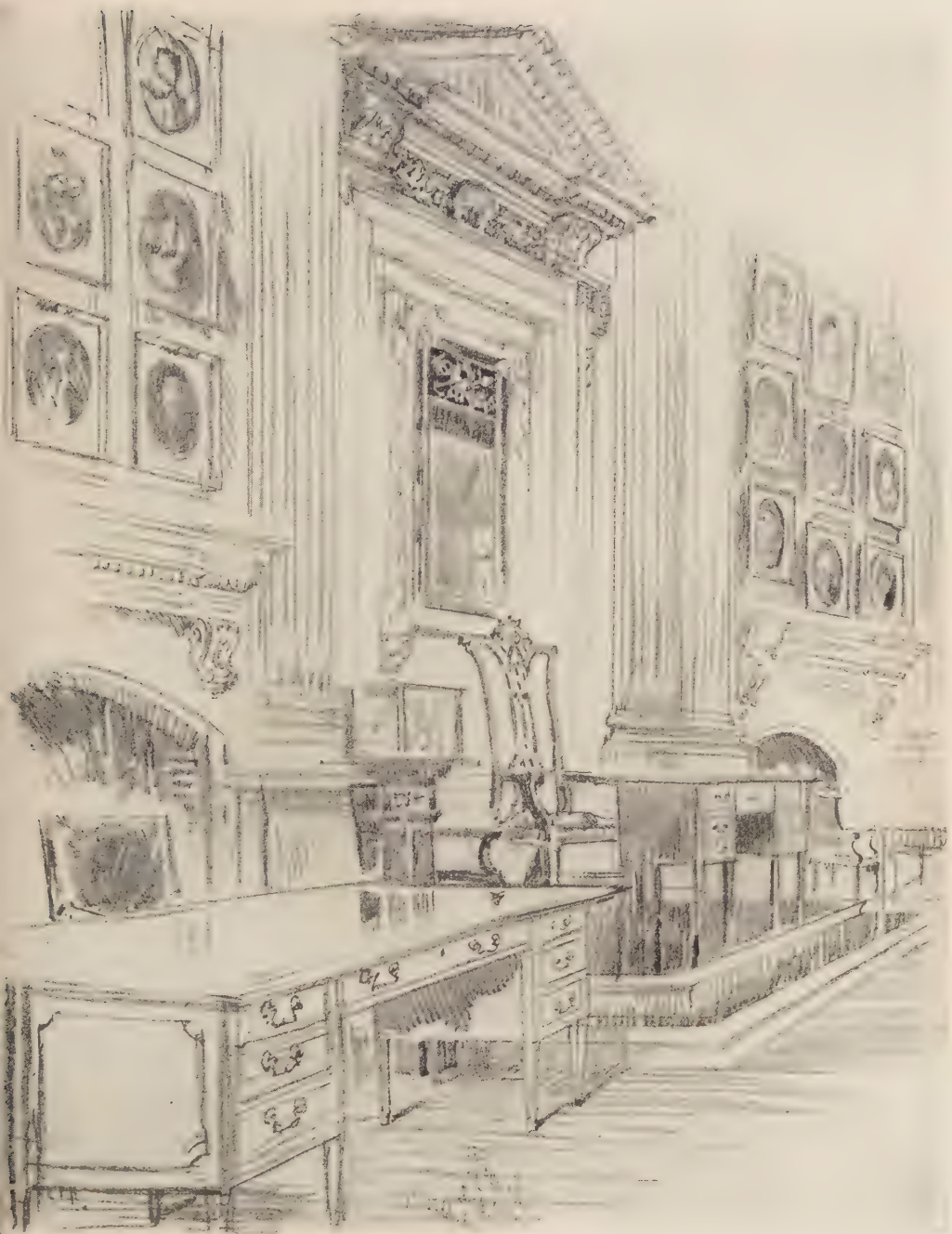
STATE HOUSE YARD



THE STATE HOUSE COLONNADE



"PROCLAIM LIBERTY THROUGHOUT ALL THE LAND UNTO ALL THE INHABITANTS THEREOF"



INDEPENDENCE HALL: THE ORIGINAL DESK ON WHICH THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE
WAS SIGNED AND THE CHAIR USED BY THE PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, JOHN HANCOCK, IN 1776
(BOTH ON PLATFORM)



THE STAIRWAY, STATE HOUSE



INDEPENDENCE HALL—LENGTHWISE VIEW



CARPENTERS' HALL, BUILT 1771



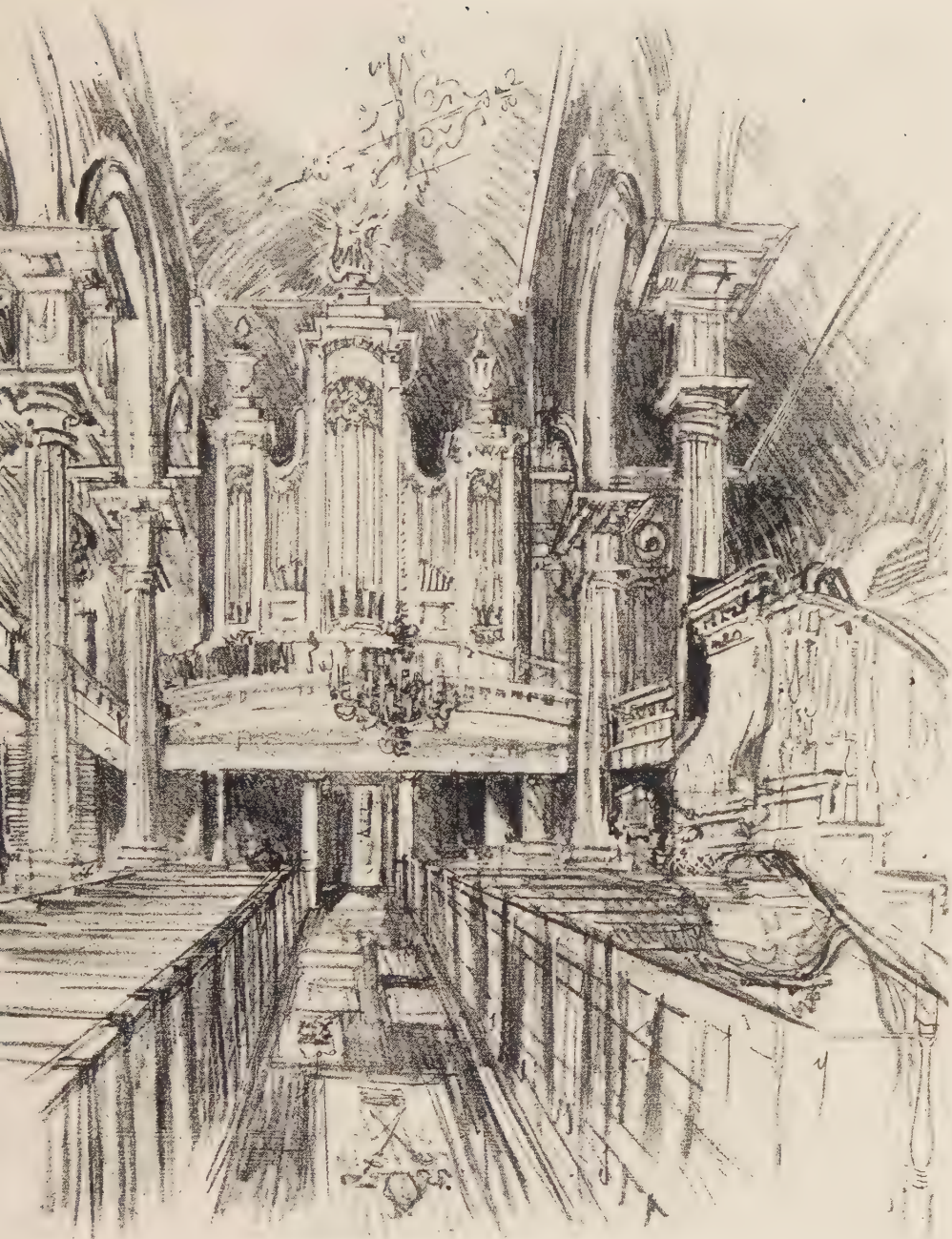
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DOWN THE AISLE AT CHRIST CHURCH

720



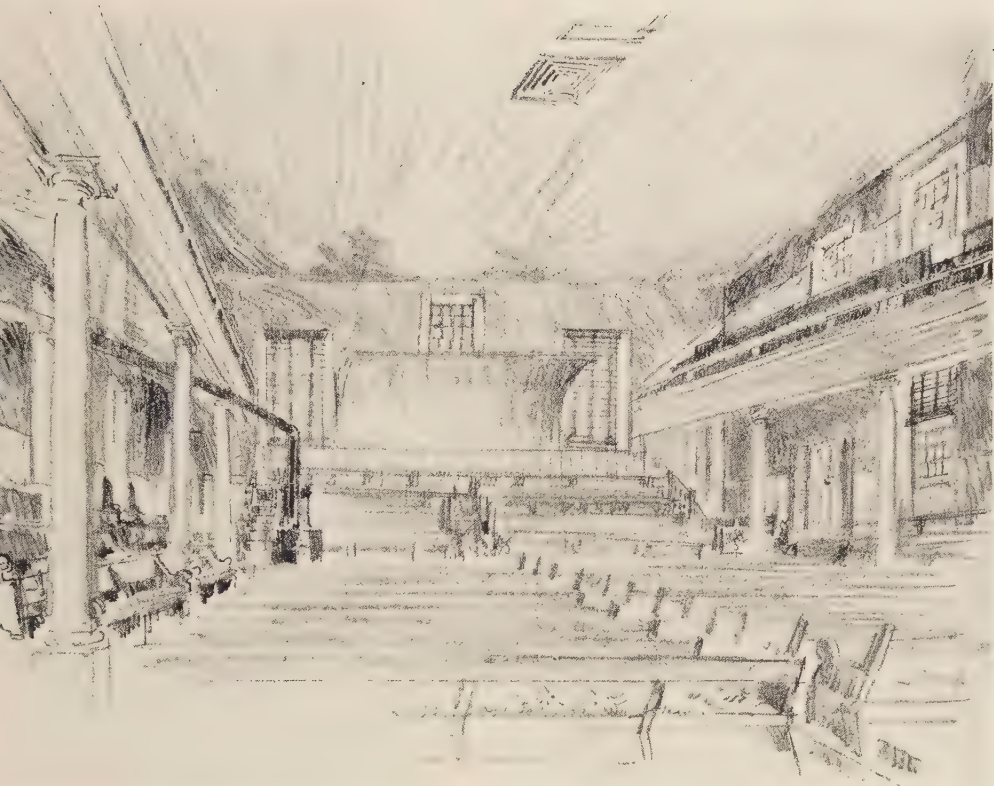
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TWELFTH STREET MEETING HOUSE



FRIENDS' GRAVEYARD, GERMANTOWN



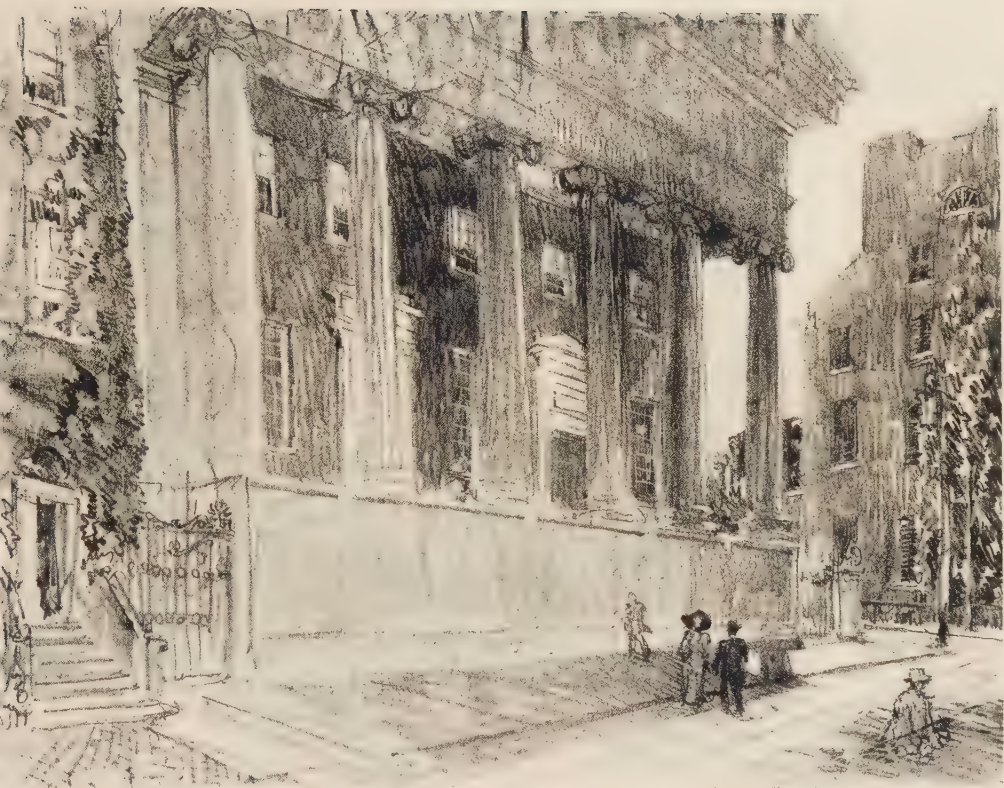
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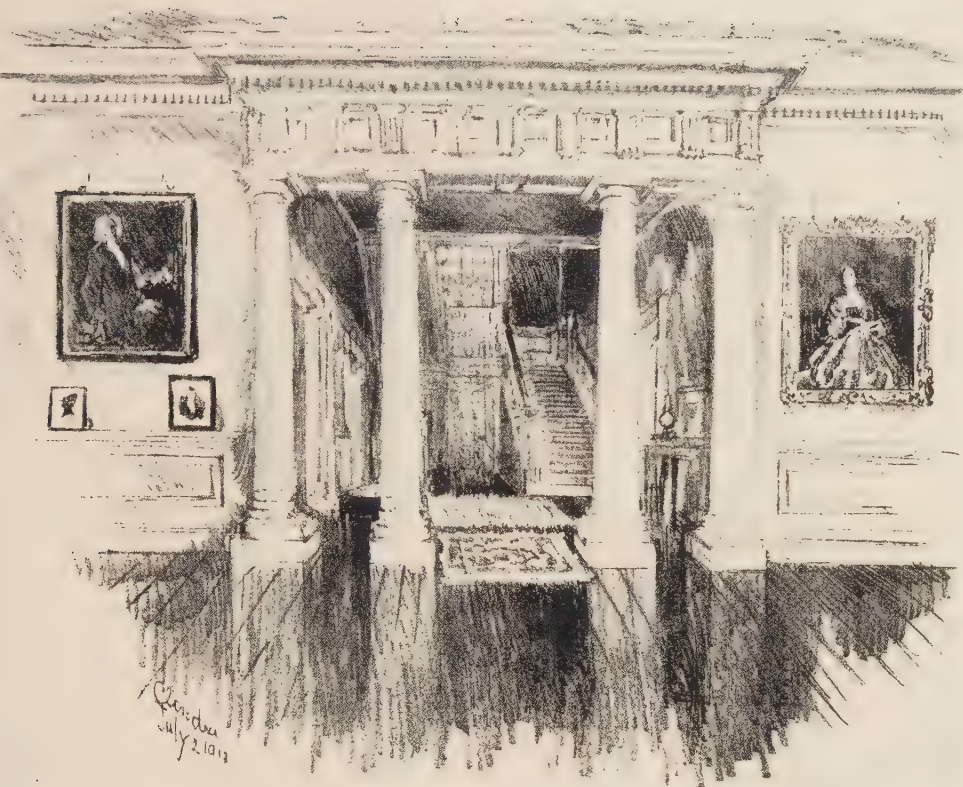
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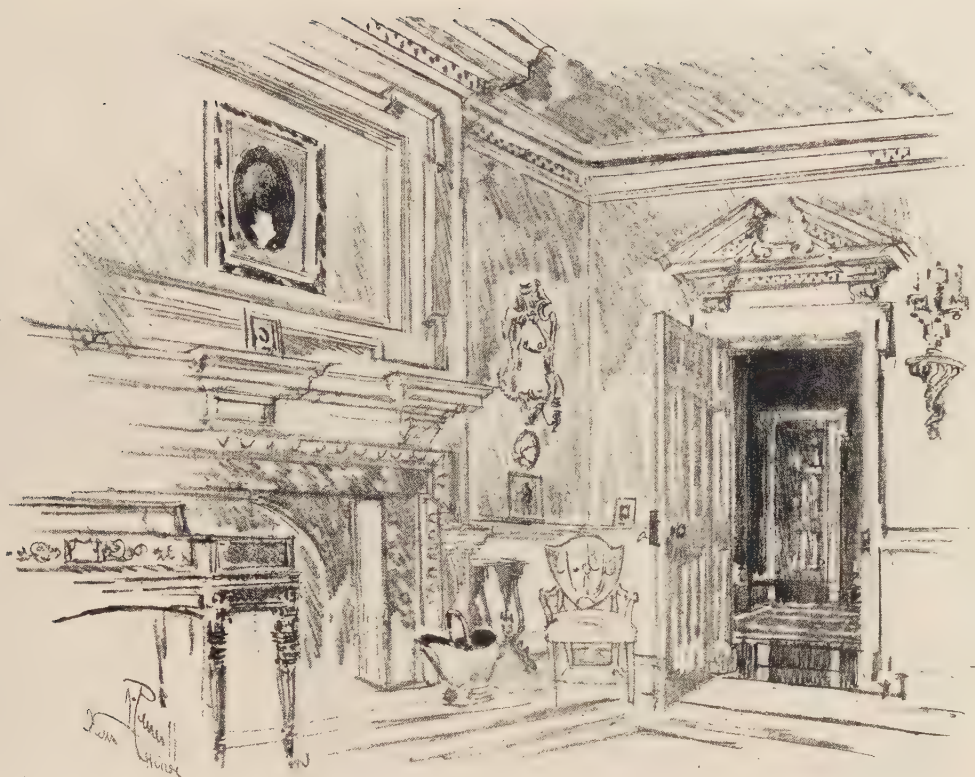
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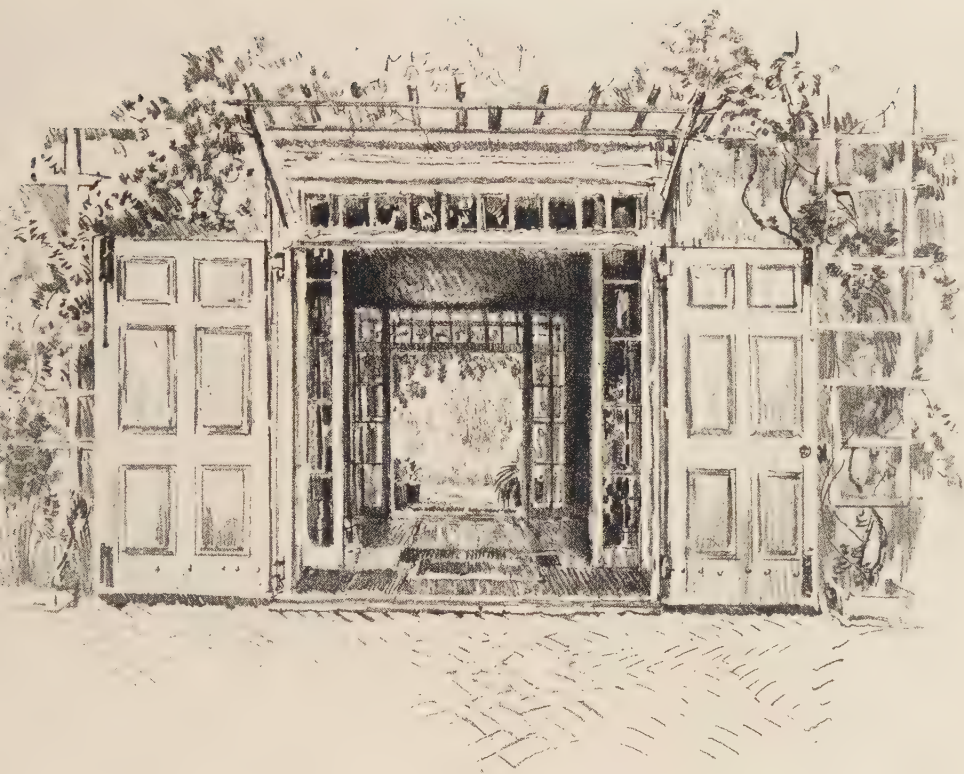
LOUDOUN, MAIN STREET, GERMANTOWN



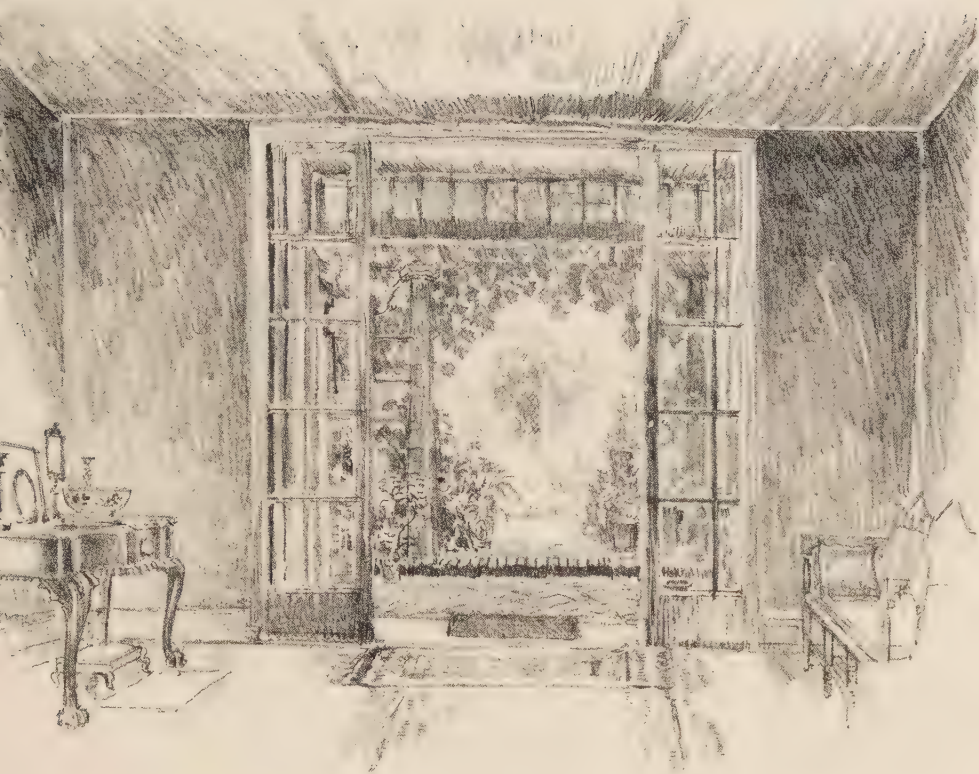
THE HALL, STENTON



THE DINING ROOM, STENTON



WYCK



WYCK
The doorway from within



BARTRAM'S



THE MORRIS HOUSE ON EIGHTH STREET



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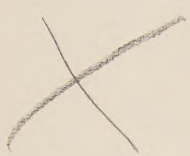
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